

# Guide to a successful Interview

Congratulations! You have been invited to a job interview. Based on your resume and cover letter, your qualifications match those the employer is seeking in a candidate. The next step is the interview, where you will have the opportunity to convey to an employer your interest in the position and to present the skills you could bring to the job.

Interviewing is the most stressful part of the job search for many people. But it doesn't have to be. Remember that an interview is a two-way street. It is a chance for you and the employer to get to know each other and to assess if the position and company are a good fit. The interview allows you to gain insight into the job and the organization, and it enables the employer to determine if you have the skills and abilities needed to be an effective member of his/her organization.

## Before the Interview

Preparation is essential and it is critical to convey a positive and polished image in order to have a productive and successful interview. Before going on your interview, take these steps to prepare yourself.

### 1. Research the Employer and the Field

- Research the employer, the position, and the industry or field.
- Know what salary range is usual for this type of position.
- Read periodicals and trade journals to learn about current trends in the field.
- Review mission statements, annual reports, and company literature.
- Think about the firm's competitors, its clients or customers.
- Be familiar with the employer's organizational structure.

### 2. Preparing for the Interview

- Role play. Find someone to practice the interview with you.
- Meet with a counselor to review your interview strategy.
- Learn the questions that are commonly asked and prepare answers for them.
- Prepare questions that you want to ask the interviewer.
- Make appropriate travel plans to arrive at the interview site early.
- Have appropriate clothes ready for the interview.
- Bring these items to the interview: your resume and references, pen, notepad, your list of questions, and a sample of your work.

### 3. Additional Tips

- Be your "best" self: let them get to know you and what you can bring to the organization.
- Think about what an employer wants to know and prepare examples.
- Keep to the point. Don't bring up extraneous matters.
- Be as specific as possible.
- Don't try to dominate the interview. Let the interviewer guide the questions.
- Ask appropriate and well thought out questions.

- Don't expect an offer on the spot.

## **The Interview**

Remember that the interview starts as soon as you walk into the building so arrive at least 15 minutes early. Employers hope to learn as much as possible about you in the interview. They will be paying attention to:

### **Nonverbal Communication Skills**

Messages are conveyed during the interview by what you say and by how you say it. Positive nonverbal communication will reinforce your verbal message.

- Greet the employer with a firm handshake.
- Maintain steady eye contact with the interviewer.
- Use positive vocal qualities and facial expressions.
- Sit attentively to demonstrate your interest and enthusiasm.
- Dress in a suitable manner to convey a polished, professional image.

### **Verbal Communication Skills**

- Listen carefully to what is being asked and answer the question.
- Ask for clarification if you don't understand the question.
- Use clear, concise answers.
- Use proper grammar.
- Don't exaggerate and don't be negative.
- Be specific: refer to concrete experiences.

### **Interview Etiquette**

- Arrive on time.
- Introduce yourself.
- Get the correct spelling of the person's name and his/her exact title. Ask for a business card.
- Don't call the interviewer by his/her first name, unless invited to do so.
- Don't ask about salary and benefits until the employer brings up the subject.
- Send a thank you note promptly.

### **Questions**

To prepare, analyze both your skills and those sought by the employer. Identify examples from your past experience where you demonstrated those skills. Be prepared to answer questions such as:

- Tell me about yourself.
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- What do you hope to be doing five years from now?
- Why have you been out of work for so long?
- What do you know about our company?
- Why do you want to work here?

- What is your greatest accomplishment?
- Why should we hire you?
- Why do you want to make a change now?
- Tell me about a problem you had in your last job and how you resolved it.
- Tell me about a time when you had to work with a difficult boss.
- Give me an example of a situation where you took charge.
- Please describe a situation in which you were involved in a project as part of a team.

### **Some Questions You Should Ask**

During the closing phase of an interview, you will be asked whether you have any other questions. Ask any relevant question that has not yet been covered.

- What are the company's current challenges?
- Could you give me a more detailed job description?
- Why is this position open?
- Are there opportunities for advancement?
- What is the next step in the hiring process?

At the end of the interview, thank the interviewer by name for taking the time to meet with you and say good-bye.

### **After the Interview**

You are not finished yet. Within a few days after your interview, send a short thank you letter to refresh the employer's memory of you. This is your opportunity to mention any experience or skills that were not discussed in your interview. Try to offer new information, if possible.

It is important to assess the interview shortly after it is concluded. It can help improve your technique and continue to build your confidence and skills. Analyzing the interview, and talking about how you were feeling during and after it, can be very helpful in preparing for the next interview.

Sources:

<http://www.job-interview.net/>

[http://www.jobweb.com/Resumes\\_Interviews/default.htm](http://www.jobweb.com/Resumes_Interviews/default.htm)

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